GUIDE TO THE MX3 RIF FILE

[The Rif are a Berber-speaking group (of the Hamito-Semitic linguistic stock) living in the mountains of northern Morocco. Although the file unit designated as MX3 Rif incorporates some limited data on the Metalsa (Mtalsa), located in southeastern Morocco and on the Ghomara (Ghomera), located in the northwest--both subdivisions of the Rif proper--the file focus is on the Central Rif area, in particular the Riffians of the north and northeast with emphasis on the tribe of the Aith Wuryaghil (Beni Wariyahhar, Ait Wäryagäl, Aith Wäryager, Beni Urriaghel, or Aith Yaryaghar), a relatively unacculturated group (i. e., to Arabic language and culture). Cultural information on the Jebala and Senhaja has been subheaded for the respective Jebala MX2 and Senhaja MX4 files.

Historically the Rif were little affected by their early contacts with the Carthaginians, Romans and Vandals. In 710 A.D. the first wave of Arab conquerors established a strong kingdom at Nekor and converted the Riffians to Islam. Later in the 11th century a second wave of nomadic Arab immigrants entered Morocco and strongly influenced the eastern Rif. In 1216 A.D. Zenata Berbers from the Moroccan Sahara conquered the region. The Spaniards, in 1497, conquered Melilla and have held it ever since. Most of the Riffian territory today falls into the former political unit known as Spanish Morocco rather than former French Morocco.

Riffian economy is based primarily on agriculture with plow cultivation, use of animal manure, irrigation and terracing of fields. Barley is the staple crop followed by maize and rye. Numerous varieties of fruits and vegetables are grown on a

small scale. Cattle are the principal domesticated animals, followed by goats, horses, donkeys, mules, dogs, chickens, bees, sheep, cats, and pigs, but no camels. Hunting and trapping are also important subsistence activities, with fishing being practiced along the coastal regions. Weekly markets (usually one in each district) are also an important part of the economy.

The Rif are primarily a sedentary people living in compact villages consisting of square houses with flat roofs, walls of stone masonary, and inner courts. Slight variations in house styles occur among the Ghomara and the semi-nomadic Metalsa. Residence was generally patri-local, although matri-local residence sometimes occurred in cases where a stranger served his father-in-law as a share-cropper. Although local endogamy was preferred, sometimes exogamous unions took place. Marriage was forbidden with FaBrDa, but allowed with other first cousins. Descent was patrilineal, but only the minor patrilineage ("vein" or jājghu), localized as an extended family, was exogamous. Several patrilineally related veins or jājghu, formed a patri-sib ("bone" or igh) which was preferentially but not exclusively endogamous and was localized as a clan. Within the community structure the patri-sib (or clan) was usually localized as a patri-local clan community (thārfiqth or dhārfiqth), which sometimes functioned as a politically independent clan-barrio. As these patri-sibs increased in size, they usually broke off from the parent organization and formed independent clan-communities of their own. Clan-villages, generally unrelated to one another within a valley or other small geographical area were politically integrated into a district (arrba) and these in turn into tribes. Five groups of districts together were known as khoms or "fifths". Political cohesion among the Rif, even at the district level, was only slight. However, each district did have its own council with the membership being chosen by the council predecessors, generally with the tendency for a father to be succeeded by his

son. The council appointed a presiding officer or moderator (moqaddem), and handled all important judicial and administrative matters. Tribal and intertribal councils assembled in cases of emergencies. Until recently the Central Rif has been independent of Moroccan administrative control, and of centralized political control in general, with each community being autonomous in handling its own affairs.

In regard to social stratification, the Rif, although generally not having slaves, did recognize a number of despised endogamous "castes", primarily in specific occupational fields. These groups were the smiths (often Negroid), musicians, public criers (who also served as market weighers and measurers), and Jews (who were confined to special colonies and subject to severe restrictions). Among ordinary freemen, while there were appreciable differences in land ownership and wealth, these differences never crystallized into sharp class distinctions and mobility both upward and downward within a single generation was common.

This file consists of seven sources of which 1: Coon and 3: Hart are probably the best for an over-view of Riffian ethnography. While 1: Coon contains material on all aspects of the culture and is particularly strong on the subsistence pattern, material culture, trait distribution, technology, economy, etc., it is weak in terms of information on social organization, a factor which is compensated in part by the equally good data on socio-political organization in 3: Hart. Hart notes in reference to this book (i.e., 1: Coon) that Coon is most accurate in his description of the tribe of the Igzinnayen, among whom he lived, while his information on other Riffian tribes, such as the Aith Wariyaghar for example, is riddled with errors of fact (e.g., Coon states that there is no moiety organization among the Rif which Hart strongly refutes). 2: Westermarck deals with

various beliefs of the Riffians, particularly with the innate sanctity of objects, places and persons, with attendent observances. Although the value of Westermarck's material has been questioned by some (e.g., Murdock), especially since he never actually visited the Rif himself but relied on Riffian informants in Tangier and Tetuan, Hart checked the bulk of Westermarck's data in the field and found them to be amazingly accurate. 4: Hart describes briefly a religious pilgrimage made by the Rif to Sīdī Khiyār, as observed by the author. 5: Blanco Izaga, dealing primarily with the Aith Waryaghar, was written by the author as a result of his twenty years of administrative experience among the Rif. Data to be found here center on socio-political organization, law and the traditions of the local communities. In the introductory part of this source, Hart provides some biographical information on Blanco Izaga, a history of colonial Morocco, and background information on the Aith Waryaghar. The second part of the work is Hart's translation of Blanco's unique and rare book La Ley Rifeña, dealing with Riffian law. It should be brought to the attention of the researcher at this point that on p. 252 of Blanco Izaga's work there is a glaring inconsistency in the presentation of his data. A number of tribal groups are listed belonging to the Ghumara (Ghomara) a subdivision of the MX3 Rif file and Sanhaja (Senhaja MX4), a different OWC cultural unit. Included in his list for the Senhaja are several Riffian groups including the Aith Waryaghar. 6: Joseph is basically an economic study written to show how wealth in such a non-industrialized society as the Rif is used to meet the needs of relatives and/or ritual obligations with the production of economic goods carefully regulated to meet such needs. A secondary theme in the source attempts to show how the market place, which is generally peripheral to Riffian economy, has led to the development of a particular type of social organization in which each local community has grown inwards, dependent on its own social and economic resources. 7: Mikesell, written by a geographer, attempts to account for the distribution of various cultural traits in northern Morocco and to show the effects of man's activities on the land.

The cultural and physical geography of the area are discussed as well as the cultural history of the region dating as far back as 500 B.C. as a background for the assessment of man's effect on vegetation and soil.

All sources in the file were based on primary fieldwork, with two, sources 5 and 7, being further supplemented by secondary source material. Sources 1, 2, and 6 were written by ethnologists, sources 3 and 4 by a social anthropologist, 5 by a government official and 7 by a geographer. As noted previously emphasis in the file in on the Aith Waryagher tribe on the Central Rif, with data on other Riffian groups being scattered and diffuse. With the addition of sources 5-7 in 1975-1976, the file has been brought up to a general level of adequacy for most cross-cultural purposes. A number of marking decisions have been made for this file. The village or dshar (dchar)--a collection of both related and unrelated clan-communities (thārfīqīns)--621, 613; farīqath--a sub-fraction or canton composed of a single hill-valley or watershed unit, comprising 4 or 5 villages--634 and/or 614; jājghū ("veins")--the extended family--596 and/or 613; thārfiqth (dharfīqth)--a form of clan-community and an amplification of the jājghū--613, 596 (sometimes 614); thakhammasth (or arrbā)--a primary section of the tribe into "fourths" and "fifths", each claiming descent from a common ancestory--619 and/or 614; taqbitch--the entire tirbe--619; "bones" (ighs)--patri-sibs--614 and/or 613; fqih--a learned man of the mosque--212, 793; concept of "turns"--571; sdaq--dowry--583; qadi--a religious judge--692; religious brotherhoods--792, 794, 795; baraka--spiritual power--778; "protectors"--556 and/or 571; and caids--631. The file was processed in the periods of 1958-1959 and 1975-1976.]